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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

AQ075B

March 19, 1981

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to _____

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

The Honorable
Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Secretary of State
Washington

Dear Al:

Following your meetings this week with President Viola, we are writing to request that you intervene on behalf of political prisoners and those men, women and children who have "disappeared" in Argentina. Former Secretary of State Vance delivered an earlier list to the Government of Argentina, making clear that there could be no military relations until some accounting was made and prisoners released.

As you know, Senator Hubert Humphrey joined us and other Senators in introducing legislation in 1977 to end all military aid and support to Argentina because of the extremely serious violations of human rights in that country. Since the military coup in 1976, up to 15,000 individuals have been seized by security forces and then "disappeared". Periodically these disappearances continue: just this past week, two more were abducted by Buenos Aires provincial police, held incommunicado, and tortured before being released.

Amnesty International, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the U.N. Human Rights Commission and other international human rights groups have documented extensive use of torture and violations of fundamental human rights; and even today, there are several thousand political prisoners who have been denied due process as well as the right of option to depart their country guaranteed by the Argentine Constitution. We are enclosing a list of particularly pressing humanitarian cases.

We believe there will be significant Congressional and public opposition to U.S. military aid to Argentina until its military junta accounts for the "disappeared", releases political prisoners, and respects the rights of its citizens. You may be aware that each Thursday,

Lot 82D275
Box 3541
(2/17)

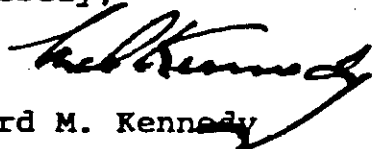
mothers of the "disappeared" hold a vigil in Buenos Aires; last week they were arrested by security police. We have met with some of them in the past and found their cases compelling reason for our country to continue to urge disclosure of the facts about their children and their grandchildren. We are making available to your Department all of the cases raised by these mothers with us, some of which are included in the enclosed list.

We hope that you will raise these concerns directly with President Viola and express your own support for these aims, as well as for the return to civilian rule and free elections in that country. To do so will be in the best traditions of our nation, and Argentine respect for freedom and human rights will make an essential contribution to increased stability and security in our Hemisphere.

With our thanks, and best personal wishes,


Alan Cranston

Sincerely,


Edward M. Kennedy